

ESSD

European Society for Social Drug Research

21st Annual Conference
30 September – 2 October 2010, Dubrovnik, Croatia

Book of Abstracts



A0001

A closer look at problematic drug use: substance use patterns, severity of dependence and social marginalization

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Background/aim: How and why should heavy, or problematic, drug use be monitored? Which definition is relevant and practical for various purposes? Babor et al. (Babor, et al., 2010) use the terms 'drug misuse' or 'problematic drug use' to describe the point at which the psychoactive substances cause problems for the user or for the society. Currently, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction is working on ways to adapt the indicator 'Problem drug use' ('injecting drug use or long-duration/regular use of opioids, cocaine and/or amphetamines') to new challenges in problem drug use monitoring: higher share of problem stimulant use, new, previously unseen groups of problem users and intensive, long-term and dependent use of e.g. cannabis (EMCDDA homepage, 2010). The aim is on an empirical basis to explore the differentiation between use and misuse/problem drug use: the patterns of use (Intensity, frequency, regularity, amount), the problematic consequences for the person itself and for the social environment.

Materials and methods: As a first study out of three in Norwegian cities, data on drug use among persons who had used amphetamines, cocaine, heroin or opiates/opioids during the last 12 months in the city of Arendal, Norway (42 000 inhabitants) was collected in April-June 2010. The RDS method – respondent driven sampling – was applied for data collection. Persons in the study population were interviewed and asked to recruit others in their social environment in a structured way. All use of substances was recorded (including combining alcohol at the same occasion as amphetamines, cocaine, heroin or opiates/opioids), the Severity of Dependence Scale (SDS)(Gossop, et al., 1995) measured for each main drug used, and data on social marginalization was included.

Results: By active seeking in drug using environments, a sample of X (to be stated) seeds and Y (to be stated) recruited drug users was achieved. Results regarding patterns of drugs use, SDS measurements and social marginalization will be presented and discussed.

Conclusion: Even though drug using patterns vary considerably in European settings, a study in a small Norwegian town yields information on drug using patterns that may be relevant in further general discussions on definitions of problematic drug use and their purpose.

A002

From the vendor in the hemp shop to the dealer in the alleyway? A comparison of the sources of supply of cannabis in a time of ‘de-normalising’ cannabis use

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Objectives: After several years of increasing ‘normalisation’ of cannabis use in Switzerland at the beginning of the new millennium, a reversed tendency, marked among others by a more stringent law-enforcement, set in. The presentation examines the question of where adolescents and young adults obtained cannabis, within the context of this societal change. In addition, it compares the sources of supply for cannabis with those found in studies of other European countries.

Methods: Analyses are based on data from the *Swiss Cannabis Monitoring Study*. As part of this longitudinal, representative population survey, more than 5000 adolescents and young adults were interviewed by telephone on the topic of cannabis. Within the total sample, 593 (2004) or 554 (2007) respectively, current cannabis users replied to the questions on sources of supply. Changes in law-enforcement and societal climate concerning cannabis are assessed based on relevant literature, media reports and parliamentary discussions.

Results: Whereas 22% of cannabis users stated in 2004 that they bought their cannabis from vendors in hemp shops, this proportion drastically decreased to 6% three years later. At the same time, cannabis was obtained increasingly from friends, while the proportion of users who purchased cannabis from dealers in the alleyway, more than doubled from 6% (2004) to 13% (2007). It was male cannabis users, and in particular, young adult and frequent users, who have moved into the alleyways. Generally, users who buy cannabis in the alleyway show more cannabis-related problems than those who mainly name other sources of supply, even when adjusted for sex, age and frequency of cannabis use.

Discussion: Possible consequences of these changes in cannabis supply, like the risk of merging a previously cannabis-only market with other ‘harder’ drugs markets, are discussed.

Acknowledgments: The Study was commissioned and financed by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (grant number 01.001316)

A003

Dimensions of integrated drugs policy

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Regardless the legal status of a substance, the countries that participated in this study have social and health policies in place for psycho-active substances. These policies address different substances to a greater or lesser extent separately (non-integrated). The research platform of the Pompidou group initiated a discussion on the question whether an integrated would be better (effective/efficient) than a non-integrated drug policy. Countries representatives wrote résumés on their countries policy developments and we (IVO) were asked to do a small empirical pilot study on integrated policy in seven European countries (UK, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal Norway, Ireland, Germany).

The objective of this pilot study is to find out

1. What “integrated policy” means in seven different countries? (Definition based empirical data)?
2. How “integrated policy” according to the definition, determined in question 1, is organized?

Methodology

The selection of the seven countries was based on diversity (integrated versus non-integrated) and on voluntary participation. Country representatives of the Pompidou group research platform identified two national experts. These experts were sent a brief questionnaire with open questions. In telephonic follow-up interviews answers were clarified and elaborated upon. In addition to that, relevant governmental websites and policy documents have been analyzed.

From the analysis it became apparent that the term integration includes a political and a policy dimension. The political dimension refers to the ideas a government holds and the policy dimension refers to how these ideas are put in practice. Five of seven countries show a tendency towards integration of substances into one overarching policy and have in place or trying to get in place an integrated form of coordination. This tendency is the expression of a shift from a focus on illegal drugs to an approach that takes social and health consequences of all substances into account.

The major drive for an integrated policy seems that alcohol is increasingly viewed as a dangerous substance that has suffered from policy negligence (Germany, Ireland, Portugal). If integration of substances into one policy occurs it is motivated by the expectation that alcohol related problems will be tackled better if integrated in existing drug policy structures. UK and The Netherlands seem to be satisfied with their non (or less) integrated policies, although both countries emphasize health and social issues in their respective substance policies.

In the countries studied a tendency can be viewed to integrate alcohol and drugs into one policy with the overarching aim to improve public health and reduce negative social consequences. Integration of policies seems to be a tool to get a better grip on social and health related problems associated with substance use.

Self-perception and social interactions of poly-drug users in Croatia

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The aim of this qualitative research is to gain an understanding and insight into, and obtain proper interpretation of, the experience provided by drug users themselves regarding their perception of their lifestyle and regular daily interactions realizing within their social setting. The participants in this research have been 50 subjects divided into two samples consisting of psychiatric hospital patients and clients of the Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention. The first group was comprised of participants aged 20-35, and the second group of aged 15-19. All of them agreed to participate voluntarily.

Observations and in-depth interviews with subjects of the research have been performed by social pedagogues in an informal and cooperative atmosphere between March and August 2010. It is important to highlight that there had been no professional or situational limitations which could have affected the research process due to the fact that all participants in the research had been in the treatment for more than 6 months before the research commenced. During that period mutual trust, partnership relationship and readiness for cooperation were established with the interviewing staff.

The research questions were generally aimed at a describing, understanding and interpreting their own perceptions, occurrences, experiences and other mechanisms that lead the participants to make choices regarding certain behaviour towards others and themselves. For example, the questions asked of a description and interpretation about successfulness they have of themselves, reasons for and significance they attached to taking drugs in various life scenarios, methods and patterns of communication with their peers and parents, sequences of events and reasons for particular way of organizing their free time and similar.

The discussions were recorded in the researchers' notes and then appropriately systemized. Check-ups and further necessary information was obtained via access to the participants' personal records.

Data processing was verbal and aimed at identifying similarities and differences in acquired themes and patterns as regards both groups of participants.

Key words: polydrug users, self-perception, social interactions

Methodological questions to investigate change trajectories for recreational substance users

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The presented methodological procedure is related to a designed study on change trajectories of recreational drug users in different European cultures. The aim is to discuss methodological questions of a proposal ahead of the implementation.

Objectives of the designed study:

The overarching aim is to study how people from contrasting cultures are able to change from the use especially of recreational new drugs. The concept of change should be investigated through the stocktaking of research, policies and the change trajectories of individuals with addictions in different cultural contexts.

Methodological issues:

1. A model of change based on the research on self-change serves as starting point.
2. The model will be transformed in a multi-domain assessment to characterise personal and social vulnerability and protection. Aim is a general assessment model to characterise the cognitive, behavioural, sociological, economic and criminological characteristics of substance use change. It should contain the identified measures of individual behavioural influence from sociological and criminological reviews, socio-environmental descriptors.
3. The instruments/questionnaires must be suitable for the target population (young recreational users >18) and for online application (with reference to existing online survey questionnaire(s)).
4. Embedding the study in an online survey as starting point. (This survey is connected to web-sides of the dance and clubber scene and gather information on use of new and emerging substances in Europe among young people. This is not the issue of the presented study).
5. The Implementation of a follow up design in the survey is planned. From this general survey it is planned to recruit consenting respondents for a 12-month follow-up interview. The follow-up population is estimated by 10% of the survey population, when an incentive (voucher) is offered.

Conclusion

Problems of the design should be discussed with the plenum of social scientists.

Friends, buyers and sellers: markets for recreational drugs

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This paper focus on how users of recreational drugs like cocaine, amphetamine and ecstasy buy these drugs. The paper both focus on what is perceived as central for the users in buying drugs (a phenomenological perspective) as well as how they actually buy the drugs (a perspective of practice).

The analysis is based on a nightclub study in Denmark in which both mainstream as well as more sub cultural clubs were researched. The data both consist of qualitative interviews with recreational drug users as well as survey data gathered through the night club study. The two materials are included in a mixed method approach where the quantitative data are analyzed with an in depth qualitative analysis.

First at all we find that the primary drug market is a private and closed market. Young night clubbers describe it as unattractive to buy drugs from unknown sellers and prefer to buy from friends and acquaintances. This means that the drugs market is knitted into social networks of friendships. The personal relation both makes the drug deal safe for the buyer as well as it assures a better quality of drugs. Price is not irrelevant. It is however an aspect that is subordinated a number of the more social aspects of buying. Second it becomes evident that the intermixing of friendship networks and drug markets also mixes together the buyer and seller role. For most of the drug users selling drugs is primarily related to getting drugs for their friends. But their experience in dealing the drugs to friends also makes it profitable for them. This makes it possible for them to expand the sales and make it into a (small) business. This seller role is as such in the same time an element that can make the young adults drift from sporadic use into a more addicted drug use. A third finding is that there do not seem to be a moral barrier between being buyer and seller. Buying and selling melts together in the network of friends that sticks together in party situations.

Survey on the attitudes of general practitioners regarding treatment of drug using patients

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Background and Aims: Based on the research concerning attitudes towards drug consumption and drug users in Hungary, we can state that drug using population in general is the most highly rejected group by the society when compared to other groups as Roma, immigrants, AIDS patients, mentally ill people etc. Considering that attitudes towards patients basically determine the communication between doctors and patients, knowing attitudes of doctors is of central importance. Aim of our research was to reveal GPs' attitudes on drug users and their opinions regarding the treatment of drug dependent patients. **Methods:** Target population was the entire number of GPs having a valid medical license, treating adults or children (6598 persons). Selection of the sample was carried out in the course of data collection by means of stratified random sampling procedure with a random assignment of the elements of the sampling frame within sampling frame subgroups identified along stratum criteria. According to the aspects of effectiveness in reaching the population and cost-effectiveness of the research, subjects were interviewed by telephone. The number of respondents was 600 therefore the survey has a margin of error of $\pm 3.9\%$ at a 95% level of confidence ($N=6598$; $n=600$). **Results:** Average age of the 600 GPs was 53.8 years ($sd=10.1$ years) and 45% of them were males. GPs felt themselves the least prepared for handling drug dependence out of the offered list of somatic and mental disorders. However, they also reported drug dependence to be the least frequent problem in their practice. Majority of GPs consider drug dependent persons to be primarily ill (86.7%) or both ill and criminal (8.1%). Vast majority of respondents reject the idea of decriminalization of illegal substance use. Similar to the general population data and data concerning psychiatrists, drug users mean the most rejected group of society in the eyes of GPs as well; however the questionnaire did not differentiate between different substances.

Conclusions: GPs are less repulsive towards drug users than general population, but they are still characterized by having relatively little knowledge on this population. In spite of this fact, majority of GPs (72%) do not reject medication of patients with addictions or even drug dependence that raises the possibility of their involvement in the treatment of addictions on the long term. Authors discuss the results in the view of former studies on the attitude of GPs and other medical staff toward drug dependent patients in other European countries.

*Research was supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Small-scale cannabis growers in Denmark and Finland

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Objectives and methodology. An increase in domestic cannabis cultivation is documented in many European countries, but we don't know whether the phenomenon or mechanisms behind that trend are similar or not in different countries. These are questions primarily for a comparative design. This study presents results from a comparative Web survey conducted among small scale cannabis growers in Denmark (June–November 2008, N=401) and Finland (May–June 2009, N=1054). We will describe similarities and differences between countries and analyze findings in national contexts and in relation to the international trend of increased domestic cultivation. Comparative studies based on similar empirical data on the subject are totally lacking in international literature.

Findings. Results of the study showed that there were many obvious similarities between the Danish and the Finnish samples of cannabis growers. Most importantly, both samples were mostly contained of small scale growers who cultivated cannabis primarily for their own use. Use for a pleasure was prioritized, but sharing with friends was also a significant motive for growing. Avoiding criminal circles, and get cheaper and healthier stuff were named as important purposes for growing both in Denmark and Finland. Only a very few told that they were growing for selling cannabis. There were also some striking differences between the Danes and the Finns. The Finnish growers were clearly prioritizing indoor cultivation whereas the Danes were up to open air cultivation. The Finnish growers were more concerned about the risk of getting caught by the police, and they were running with smaller number of plants than the Danes. Growing for medical purposes was twice as prevalent in the Finnish sample as in the Danish one. Even though results do not allow us to generalize results to the whole population, it widens our knowledge about the phenomenon and gives us a change to speculate if differences in the number and age of respondents were describing real discrepancies between countries.

Conclusions. Our respondents in Denmark and Finland were clearly representing the ideological side of domestic cannabis cultivation. Instead of growing for making money and profit in the market they were growing for pleasure and sharing with friends. In a way they may be seen as life style growers aiming at personal fulfillment and enjoyment in their social networks. Findings from our Nordic samples shared a lot of similar features with some European studies, and it seems evident that Internet as an arena for an international community around small scale cannabis cultivation had promoted the spreading of the international trend of domestic cannabis cultivation strongly.

Small scale cannabis growers' experiences with and considerations over use and strengths of different types of cannabis

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New forms of organised and technologically supported in-door cannabis cultivation aimed at supplying domestic markets have become lucrative business. The same techniques are also used on small-scale basis for own consumption. Highly potent cannabis strains have caused growing concern as to whether this may produce an increase in problematic use and long term harmful effects (see EMCDDA 2004). Still though, there is a lack of knowledge about how and why people choose to use cannabis and what needs it fulfils to effectively minimize possible harms and prevent misuse (The Global Cannabis Commission Report 2008). The present work, looking into how various types of cannabis, including new strains with higher THC levels are grown, used and perceived by users, may make a modest contribution.

Methodology: The paper draws on data from a mixed method study on cannabis cultivation in Denmark. The study has used a combination of quantitative data from an internet survey and qualitative interviews. For the present purpose interviews with 42 current small-scale growers make the primary source for analysis. The interview sample comprises men and women between 18 to 71 years who have grown/used from two to more than thirty years. All but two regard themselves as experienced users.

Objectives: The paper explores cannabis growers' experiences/perceptions of potency. It discusses themes of use and growing in relation to specific preferences of strains and strengths, including purpose for growing and consumption; experiments with strains of various strengths, and employment of strategies and techniques to maximize or lower potency.

Theoretical reflections/approach: The study is explorative. Following the tradition of ethnographic research it examines the life world, activities and subjective experiences from the perspective of the study subjects (Agar 1997, Marcus 1998).

Results: Two main groups were identified. One consists primarily of older growers/users relying on traditional out-door growing. The other represents younger growers/users whose growing is mainly in-door based with use of various techniques. Among both groups we find persons who prefer/aim to produce potent cannabis. While the older tend to stick to seeds produced from their own harvests or that of friends, and who most often grow one single type, the younger ones experiment with seeds/seedlings of different strains bought from internet shops or members of cannabis discussion fora with the purpose to raise plants of high potency. Among both groups are persons who go for milder types suited for social recreational use as well as strains suited for pain relief and other medical conditions. For all, taste and flavour are important and organically grown cannabis is preferred.

Mephedrone on Youtube: A qualitative video analysis

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Objective: To show the new drug mephedrone represented on Youtube by the (new) method, qualitative video analysis.

A new party drug called Mephedrone has appeared in the UK in December 2009. We knew anecdotal and media reports or „grey” literature about it. Freely available video broadcast sites, such as YouTube, are quick responding and popular sources of information for the users. The aim of the study was to investigate what kind of information can be learned from the Internet about mephedrone 3 months after the appearance (March, 2010).

Methodology: We designed a method for qualitative video analysis by terms and tools of qualitative visual analysis (rooted in ethnomethodology and conversation analysis) and hermeneutic analysis (the analysis of social representations in the media, discourse and images). We chose to link qualitative coding and visual analysis by focusing on two main topics: representing the quality of the mephedrone experience and the video’s attitudes towards the mephedrone as a new drug. We followed the coding tradition by approaching openly to the data for finding significant patterns and constantly comparing the codes with the data. We defined content labels and investigated open-coding of implicit and explicit information of the videos by two independent coders.

Significant results: The relevant videos (28 out of 178, total duration 64,6 minutes) have been classified by two independent raters along content labels and codes. Two content labels of the quality of the mephedrone experience and nine content labels of attitudes towards mephedrone expressed in the videos were described. Codes were detailed about the usage, the facts and the psychological, physical, emotional effects of mephedrone. *Findings:* Twenty-three videos were made by independent users and 5 by news agencies. Half of the videos were transmitting that the mephedrone experience means to get high. The videos attitude was mainly informative, and more encouraging than discouraging or harm reductive. Pro rata the videos of news agencies were enhancing moral panic (in sociological theoretical frame) and only these videos supported illegality of mephedrone.

Conclusions: Very few videos were made by news agencies making discouraging impression that in the initial phase of this new drug would be needed, because of the majority of amateur videos made by users that have strong encouraging attitude. Freely available video broadcast sites, such as YouTube, are quick responding and popular sources of information for the users, it is important to have method for analyzing these videos.

Keywords: mephedrone, qualitative video analysis, internet, attitudes

Obstacles to progression for methadone patients: A qualitative synthesis of the literature

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Study objectives

Explore how methadone clients construct visions of progress and what this means to them

Explore how methadone clients interpret and tackle what they perceive to be obstacles to progress

Explore relations that pertain within the methadone treatment regime between service users and providers

Explore the views of methadone clients on their relationship to the drug methadone

Provide a substantive contribution to the knowledge base on obstacles to progress for methadone clients

Methods

Meta-ethnography was developed by (Noblit and Hare, 1988) to synthesize qualitative research studies and was subsequently used in qualitative synthesis by (Britten et al, 2002; Campbell et al, 2003; Atkins et al, 2008 and Rhodes and Treloar, 2008). Meta-ethnography is a new approach in drugs research and has the potential to provide a robust demonstration of the usefulness of qualitative research to policy and practice than could be achieved by relying on any single study. Individual qualitative studies are often context specific and difficult to generalize from their findings to a wider context and population. Synthesizing qualitative studies moves the investigation beyond the specific, while also, seeking to retain the context that underpins individual studies.

Questions that arise from using meta-ethnography include the following; how is the quality of studies decided, do we lose context and meaning from individual studies when they are synthesised and how can meta-ethnography accommodate different theoretical standpoints in research e.g. ethnography vs. Grounded theory?

SocIndex, PsychINFO and Medline were searched for studies that (i) focused on methadone treatment (ii) used qualitative research and (iii) focused in progression and recovery. From an initial yield of 50 studies, 11 were selected for synthesis based on the following criteria;

- the included an adequate focus on addiction recovery
- the reported the views from service users (Popay *et al*, 1998)
- the included a clear description of methods of enquiry including data collection, sampling, data analysis (Dixon-Woods *et al*: 2004)
- Studies that included 'thick description' and interpretation of data (Popay *et al*: 1998)

Results

Four new third order concepts were developed that constitute a line of argument thesis which speaks to the obstacles to recovery for methadone clients. These concepts were not developed in any of the individual studies and therefore the objective of developing a more robust conceptual understanding of the obstacles to progression for methadone clients has been achieved. In bringing together these eleven empirical investigations, it has been demonstrated that qualitative

research studies, when synthesized, can expand the knowledge base on methadone treatment and provide policy makers and practitioners with critical pointers for reflection on the organization and overall culture of methadone prescribing. The four concepts that constitute a line of argument thesis are

- *Absence of therapeutic dialogue*
- *Trapped in the recycling of failure*
- *Recovery support deprivation*
- *Impediments to self-actualization*

Conclusions

Taken together these four third order concepts constitute an interpretive model of signifiers for critical reflection by policy makers and practitioners. The model suggests that methadone treatment is structured on controlling the social progression of clients and deprives them of the therapeutic oxygen they seek that could assist them to address their addiction, repair their spoilt identity and facilitate their exit from the illicit drug world to mainstream social participation. The methadone prescribing regime could be reinvigorated and strengthened by integrating the recovery objectives of clients which speaks to their desire to reclaim control over their lives, restore their identity and become active agents in their resocialisation.

Music and drug use among French adolescents

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Background: Drug use during adolescence is a part of lifestyle and strongly linked to sociability. But few representative studies focus on the association between going out in concerts and drug use.

Method: a national representative self administered survey conducted in France in 2005 among 29,393 French adolescents aged 17 provides detailed information about drug use, leisure activities (going in bars, at someone else's place, hanging around with friends, going to sport matches as a spectator, going in nightclubs), school situation and SES of the family and music preferences. Frequencies of going out in concert, considering 11 different styles of music were analysed using a clustering analysis. Multivariate logistic regressions were used to assess the link between clusters and tobacco daily use, alcohol use, being drunk, cannabis use, and lifetime use of stimulants (ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine) taking all confounders into account.

Results: Frequencies and types of concerts are both associated with drug use. 5 main clusters for going out in concerts were found: Rare outings (68%), Rock (11%), Techno (4%), Rap-caraiïbe (3%), Moderate rap (14%). The cluster Techno had the highest prevalences of use for all substances, whereas the cluster Rare outings had the lowest. These results were confirmed by multivariate logistic analyses. Additionally, we found that adolescents of the cluster Techno consumed alcohol or cannabis more frequently during week, in discos or in concert, but also at friend's house, at school and in the street. They also showed high prevalences of solitary use.

Conclusion: outings in concert are occasions for young people to smoke, drink and use drugs out of sight of the parents. Frequencies and types of concerts are both associated with drug use. Additional research should detail the clusters and focus on music preferences.

Cocaine users' narratives of self and social enhancement

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In the European context, it is widely recognized that cocaine is often used in combination with alcohol and other drugs. However, much less is known about how drug users' view the benefits of these drug combinations. This paper examines the patterns of polydrug use among a sub-sample of recreational cocaine users recruited for a larger qualitative study of cocaine use in Northern Ireland. The study's recreational users comprised twenty-four adults, including eleven males and thirteen females between the age of 19 and 56 years (mean age of 25.6 years). All were interviewed in-depth for the purpose of the study.

The study's recreational cocaine users were experienced users of a range of other drugs at the time they first used cocaine. Simultaneously polydrug use – consuming two or more illicit substances at the same time – and sequential polydrug use – taking two or more illicit substances consecutively in a short time period – were commonly practices. Popular drug combinations included cocaine and ecstasy and cocaine and cannabis, and users' consumption of these drug 'cocktails' was associated primarily with a desire to enhance or accelerate a drug high. Use contexts included both public and private settings, which influenced the drug combinations chosen by cocaine users during specific use episodes. This paper examines users' 'vocabularies of motives' for the co-use of cocaine and other drugs, focusing in particular on their narratives of self and social enhancement. It also reports on users' perspectives on the negatives or down-sides of combi-drug use, experiences which led a number to curb their intake of cocaine and other drugs. The implications for efforts to reduce drug-related harm are discussed.

The family, peers and adolescent drug use: the challenges and benefits of a mixed methods research design

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Objectives

The objectives of the study were to examine the influence of the family (family structure, perceived parenting styles, perceived parent-child relations and parental drug) and peer group (peer pressure and peer selection, drug use by best friend, siblings and boyfriend/girlfriend) on the current use of drugs by a sample of school attending young people in Northern Ireland.

Methodology

The study was conducted within a pragmatic paradigm whereby the influence of the family and peers on adolescent drug use was identified as being central. The methods of data collection and analysis were then chosen to provide insight into young people's drug use. A three phase, sequential mixed methods design was utilized with each stage informing the development of the following stage of data collection. In *Phase 1*, nine focus groups ($n=62$) were facilitated to explore initial themes around the family and peers and to develop items for a questionnaire. In *Phase 2*, a questionnaire was distributed to 1,114 young people (aged 11-19 years). In *Phase 3*, six participatory workshops were facilitated to disseminate the results of *phases 1 and 2* to a sample of young people ($n=40$) providing participants with the opportunity to interpret the research findings and formulate their own recommendations for parents, teachers, schools and policy. The qualitative data was analysed using content analysis (QSR NVivo) and the questionnaire study enabled the evaluation of a theoretical model of drug use using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with SPSS version 11 & LISREL 8.70.

Conclusions

Although the study was conducted within Northern Ireland, the methodological conclusions and implications of using mixed methods are applicable to other countries/regions. The benefits and challenges of adopting a pragmatic paradigm within the research study will be presented. The mixed-methods design added greater insight into adolescent drug use as opposed to the mono-method approach. It addressed the objectivity-subjectivity continuum; the strength of one method compensated for the weakness of another method; the sequential design enabled the development of appropriate data collection methods and the variety of methods used enabled the explanation of the results. However, the pragmatic paradigm also presented challenges for the researcher who was required to be adept in the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods as well as mixing methods appropriately and as a result was time consuming. However, the benefits outweighed the challenges of using mixed methods. Recommendations for using a mixed methods design applied to adolescent drug use will be outlined.

Is 'Just say no' still an acceptable basis for informing young people about drugs?

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Background: Levels of drug use have increased in Northern Ireland during the past decade and particularly amongst young people. Generally, UK policies on drug use reflect a prohibitionist stance which has proved unrealistic. A policy of harm reduction may be a more appropriate tool to reduce the risk associated with drug use.

If the literal meaning of harm reduction is to reduce social harm, it could then be interpreted as promoting individual and societal safety. Arguably, drug use can, directly and indirectly, increase the risk of harm in society. Therefore, it is suggested that instead of unrealistic ideals of abstinence, measures that increase the safety of the user/ potential user should be employed. Harm reduction needs to be culturally and contextually sensitive. Analysis of NI and Dutch case-studies on, harm reduction will be discussed in their respective contexts.

Methods: The researcher examined the perceived value of drug use education in twelve post primary schools in Northern Ireland within the context of harm reduction. The research methodology included: a survey of pupils over two time points, focus groups with pupils selected from the survey sample and individual interviews with teachers and youth workers with the responsibility for the provision of drug education in schools.

Results: The results showed that prior to receiving drug education classes in school the majority of young people received most of their information concerning drugs from their friends and the media. School based drug education, however, was generally taught from an abstinence perspective through the medium of religious education. Almost half of all the pupils surveyed indicated that even after these drug education classes, their knowledge of drugs was still very limited. They felt that this approach failed to make them less likely to take drugs, and they were also unable to reduce the associated risks.

Conclusions: The current programme of school based drug education makes the deterministic assumption that young people cannot be trusted to make rational choices regarding drug use. This approach relocates autonomy and agency away from young people and onto schools. A paradigm shift, therefore, is required if young people are to be in a position to make rational and informed choices predicated on accurate information and education.

A01.

Prison culture, drug use and drug distribution in a Flemish prison: reflections on an ongoing

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“Studies carried out between 2001 and 2006 in Europe show that between 1% and 56% of inmates report having used drugs within prison [...]” (EMCDDA, 2008, p. 33) Despite the European consensus on the widespread presence of drugs in our prisons, little is known about the non-numeric aspects of drug use and distribution in prisons. The collection of European qualitative research concerning this topic is limited (Cope, 2000; Dillon, 2001; Inciardi et al., 1993; Keene, 1997; Seal et al., 2004). The present qualitative research project aims to illustrate the significance of consumption and distribution of (legal and illegal) drugs in prison to detainees and correctional officers and its underexposed influence on their interactions. In my presentation I will zoom in on a specific research stage, namely the data-analysis. This process of analysis constantly alternates with the process of data gathering. NVivo8 is used to organize and analyse the data (transcripts of conversations and field notes). I will largely deal with the (still ongoing) analysis process. Here and there I will briefly give some preliminary results. I will reflect upon this choice of analysis method. Even within the same ‘analysis-style’, there exists a methodological heterogeneity (Cutcliffe, 2005, p. 422).

The positivistic approach proclaims to be a *“total methodological package”* that gives the researcher the chance to pass preconceived problems, concepts and formats of data collection over and to generate concepts that make sense of what is going on (Glaser, 1999, p. 838). We start from a constructivist Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 1988). This approach is based upon a concept-indicator model (Ten Have, 1997), but there is more than coding itself that constitutes the analysis (Noaks & Wincup, 2004, p. 132).

What were my personal beginner's errors and how did I handle them? Is the assumed *“conceptual grab”* (Glaser, 1999, p. 840) that is freeing the researcher to be his own theorist, a pitfall? Does the messages just emerge from the data through alertness and reflexivity on the part of the researcher as Glaser and Strauss (1967) claim?

New synthetic drugs: always one step ahead?

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The rapid development in molecular chemistry and neuropsychopharmacology has opened up new avenues for exploring novel psychoactive substances. From time to time, the emergence of previously less known “designer drugs” may also cause a notable social impact, or alternatively the topic may sink into oblivion. Despite differences in actual drug types and drug effects, there seem to be many similarities in the repeated patterns of social responses to new drug use, even across borders. By making history repeat itself, it looks like these new synthetic drugs (NSD) are always one step ahead – but are they really?

Social discourses on NSD seem to be based on a disproportional interplay of at least four groups: Drug researchers and experts; official policy-makers; the public media; and the drug users themselves. Thus, the convergence of social sciences, law and media psychology makes the issue of NSD truly interdisciplinary, and raises many interesting questions. What biopsychosocial parameters may affect the success and lifespan of a new drug? Are these new drugs just substitutes for their better-known chemical relatives, or are there any genuinely new reasons, settings, patterns and problems emerging? What motivates users to try out NSD? In particular, how do the public media, legislative measures, and social networks affect the users’ decisions?

In our presentation, we first briefly review the history of some NSD during the last decade in Hungary. To add a European dimension, this national drug history will be compared to corresponding NSD timelines in other countries. Since our earlier contribution at last year’s ESSD conference, we expanded our subject pool from our previous focus group to include also e.g. users of 4-methylmethcathinone (4-MMC, mephedrone). In addition to an internet survey already carried out earlier this year, we are also utilizing new methodological approaches, such as online (MSN/Skype) interviewing of NSD users. Preliminary results from both our quantitative and qualitative studies will be presented.

The phenomenon of NSD raises also important theoretical questions, as well as bioethical implications. How can substances be compared on the basis of “substantial similarity”? Can the lack of information justify control measures based on the “precautionary principle”, at the cost of causing more social harm than it may avoid? Is there an inherent conceptual bias toward admittedly toxic yet economically important substances (such as tobacco, alcohol, and pharmaceuticals) that are usually excluded from comparisons with NSD? These questions are also to be addressed briefly in the presentation.

A018

From boom to dust: an analysis of the rise and fall of the Irish cocaine market during the *Celtic tiger* era.

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With prevalence rates for cocaine use and cocaine seizures above the EU average, Ireland’s thriving cocaine market can be seen to have developed in tandem with the period of rapid economic growth experienced during 1998 - 2008 (dubbed the *Celtic Tiger*) when cocaine became a metaphor for wealth, status and success for both its consumers and suppliers.

Using data collected during a multi-site qualitative longitudinal study examining the impact of the economic boom on four disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, this paper traces the transition of the drug economies operating in these areas during this period from predominantly heroin-based markets to cocaine markets and, taking a political economy analysis, examines the meaning of these neighbourhood drug economies.

Supported by interview and ethnographic data with drug users and other residents, police and law enforcement officials and local drug and community services, as well as relevant drug trend and economic data, this paper examines the impact of the drugs market on drug trends in the area, on drug related violence and crime arising from the rapidly expansion and contraction of the drugs economy, and on community safety and the quality of life for residents. Focusing on the social and financial opportunities the cocaine market offered to young people excluded from the formal market economy, this analysis of drug dealing networks demonstrates the need for broad scope drug policies and a shift in policy thinking from penalisation to social protection.

A019

“Getting mowed” on mephedrone

Christina O’Neill

Queen’s University, Belfast.

Mephedrone is one of several “new” drugs which have recently arrived on the European drug scene. This paper draws on data from two qualitative studies, in which I am directly involved, that focus on mephedrone use. The first study is based on face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with mephedrone users in Northern Ireland. The second study is an ongoing, longitudinal ethnography, which follows a group of “recreational” drug users from Northern Ireland, over a five-year period. Within the first year of the study commencing, the majority of respondents used cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy on a weekly basis. Year 2 of the study revealed a notable decrease in the use of ecstasy among the group, and consumption of cocaine increased, both in terms of quantity and frequency. We are now in year 3 of the ethnographic study, and the arrival of mephedrone has brought about significant changes in the patterns of drug use, among the sample population.

Drawing on data from both studies, this paper will provide a general overview of patterns of mephedrone use, and the social settings in which the drug is used. I will highlight some colloquial terms which respondents use to refer to mephedrone use, for example, “getting mowed” on “plant food.” I will highlight the role which the media have played in demonising mephedrone use, and the impact which consequent stigmatisation can have on those who choose to use the substance. Finally, the effects of prohibition on the availability, and subsequent use of mephedrone, among the sample are investigated.

The arrival of mephedrone on the European drug scene has obvious implications for future drug policy. Whilst most European countries have introduced legislation to prohibit the substance, there are already new and legal alternatives to mephedrone becoming available in “head shops”. This, in turn calls for investigative research into the use of mephedrone, and similar psychoactive legal substances.

The crack drug market at user level in Amsterdam.

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Crack cocaine made its way in the Dutch hard drugs market in the late 1980s and has evolved into a drug of choice for marginalized and low socio-economic hard drug users, very often in combination with opiates. While in the early 1990s in the United States it was being sold in a ready to use form, the users in The Netherlands used to “cook” it themselves until the mid-late 1990’s, in which dealers started selling ‘balls’ of ready to use crack, until the point of making it almost impossible to find powder cocaine in the street scene. This change in the trade market, which has also taken place in other European cities, has made the use of this substance more frantic. These circumstances have added up to the use of crack as a compulsive and expensive one, with public order consequences. In this presentation we will present findings of the study “Prevalence, treatment needs and new pharmacotherapeutical options for the crack addicted population in The Netherlands”, in which a survey in the three biggest Dutch cities is being carried on, covering a variety of issues, including buying and selling crack .

Objectives: To analyze the key factors at user level in the Amsterdam crack market. These factors include price and quantities sold and bought, other drugs being sold in combination with crack, places and times where crack is being sold and/or used, availability, and the role of users at ground level transactions.

Methods: A survey was conducted in Amsterdam, recruiting 200 frequent crack users through respondent driven sampling (RDS). Frequent use was established as at least two days a week during last month. Respondents completed a semi-structured interview, which lasted approximately 30 minutes, after which they were invited to bring two other respondents, for which they would receive a reward. All data has been collected and classified.

Significant results and conclusions: Demographic variables will be analysed with RDSAT software to correct for recruiting and network size bias. Other variables will be analysed using PASW v. 17.0. Differences between variables is measured by Chi² (p<0.005) for categorical variables and Student’s t-tests for continuous variables, and non-parametric correlation analyses where appropriate.

The results of this study can serve as a benchmark for other European countries which already have urban areas where crack is being sold, and for countries which might face this phenomenon in the near future. Insight on drug dealing patterns is important in order to minimize harm on users and public order.

Marginalized drug users in Helsinki

Jussi Perälä and Tuukka Tammi

A-Clinic Foundation

The presentation discusses how the image on marginalized drug users may appear different depending on research method and data used to study them; whether the analysis based on a quantitative inquiry, or an ethnographic study on the drug scene in Helsinki.

The two research projects and related data compared from this perspective are:

(1) An ongoing study (by Perälä & Tammi) based on 100 structured interviews of marginalized, Helsinki-based drug users whose frequent consumption had taken place up to one year ago. As part of a comparative project between six European capitals ('Quaf2'), the users were interviewed at the end of 2009 on their choice of substances, consumption patterns, sources of substance purchase and their expenditure on drug use. Also data on the users' general socio-economic situation as well as on their experiences from control, treatment and other regulative systems were gathered. Most of the respondents were recruited from drop-in centres where drug users visit anonymously with a pseudonym to exchange needles and syringes, and get other forms of assistance. Additionally, twenty interviews were made by a drug user peer her in social networks, and the rest through a substitution treatment programme.

(2) An ethnographic study (by Perälä) on the drug users and drug markets in the Helsinki metropolitan area. The data for this study are derived from participatory and non participatory observation, conversations, and qualitative interviews with the people who have various roles in the

drug markets. The research also exploits interviews with the law enforcement and customs officers and the pre-trial phase of the criminal process documents. The data for this study were gathered between 2005 and 2009.

Bitter sweet. The leap towards cocaine

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Main Objective: To determine with greater depth and accuracy mechanisms, reasons, motivation and practices that have led cocaine, for many illegal drug users, to replace other drugs, thereby making it the main drug consumed among all illegal drugs

Methodology

The methodological approach used is *qualitative methodology* based on the techniques of discussion groups (Ibáñez, 1986; Ortí 1986, Alonso, 1998). That is to say, gatherings of 7 or 8 people, with more or less similar characteristics, who speak freely for approximately two hours about a topic that the group develop, under the coordination of a facilitator. (Conde, 2002).

The discussion groups were analyzed with the help of qualitative analysis software Atlas-ti 5.2. following the model of segmentation, simplification, categorisation and codification. To find the results and conclusions of the research conducted, a discourse analysis was carried out on the body of the text which appeared.

Significant results: Cocaine users prefer this to other stimulant drugs such as MDMA or speed, for several reasons. The most important are: Cocaine does not alter food consumption or sleep. It allows users to eat and sleep to a greater extent than other stimulants. This means that the lows are less intense, allowing users to perform other activities, suggesting that the consumption of cocaine is compatible with family relationships, work and social commitments. This implies that there is a low risk of difficult situations arising since the consumer is socially-standardized. Only when the use is very heavy is any alarm raised in the users' social circle.

Many users talk about a love-hate relationship with cocaine, since the pleasurable effects of it have allowed them to experience enjoyable moments and situations, which are full of strong emotions and good memories. However, all of them have experienced unwanted effects produced by cocaine consumption, such as spending beyond their means, anxiety and psychotic effects, among others. Nevertheless, these situations do not have lasting negative consequences unless there are severe problems. But it is, by and large, social responsibilities (getting married, having children, working ...) which make users give up their consumption, or at least lead them to use cocaine only on special occasions. So, we find that young people are taking on the role of parents and continuing to consume cocaine.

Conclusions: One of the biggest risks in the consumption of cocaine is the lack of negative effects in the short term. As a result of having few severe post-consumption effects, users consider that they are at a low risk because they can continue their normal life. This situation suggests a typical social belief which underestimates the risks that are run when taking the drug.

The association between SDQ patterns and substance use in 15 year olds

Oliver Perra, Patrick McCrystal, Leeanne O'Hara and the BYDS team

Institute of Child Care Research, School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work

Whilst a range of studies have investigated the associations between behavioural problems and substance misuse in adolescence, many focus upon the use of one or two substances only. Furthermore, relatively few studies have focused on individual differences in the patterns of substance misuse. In this study we investigated the use of both licit (alcohol, tobacco, alkyl inhalants) and illicit substances (cannabis and ecstasy) in a sample of 3669 adolescents aged 14-15 years who were participating to the 4th stage of the Belfast Youth Development Study. Participants completed a questionnaire on drug use and lifestyle. To investigate individual differences in the patterns of substance use, we used Latent Class Analysis (LCA). The LCA results suggested that adolescents' drug profiles were accounted for by 3 classes: a class of non users, which was the most numerous, a class of moderate users reporting some use of tobacco, cannabis and alcohol intoxication during the last year, and a class of adolescents that reported use of all the substances considered. We investigated the association between responses to Goodman's Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire and affiliation to one of the three classes of substance use. The results suggested that higher scores in the hyperactivity and conduct problems scales were significantly associated with using more substances. The results contribute to research on the associations between behavioural problems and substance use. These results indicate a potential value of this approach for screening for behavioural problems as part of substance misuse initiatives.

Keeping down the weeds: cannabis eradication as crime prevention

Gary Potter

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London South Bank University

Cannabis cultivation is illegal, and eradication of the cannabis plant is a stated goal of international drug control efforts. Yet cannabis cultivation not only continues in many countries of the developing world, it has also emerged and expanded in many countries of the developed world. Eradication efforts are clearly not working.

The emergence of domestic cannabis cultivation, and in particular the spread of indoor cultivation, in an increasing number of Western nations poses new challenges to eradication efforts. This chapter uses the case-study of indoor commercial cultivation in the UK to illustrate the difficulties involved in the policing of this particular and peculiar crime.

Failures in drug crop eradication efforts have often been blamed on geographical and socio-economic conditions in the countries and regions where narcotic crops have been grown. New patterns of cannabis cultivation suggest that this blame is misplaced. Challenges to cannabis eradication are inherent in the nature of the act rather than in the geographical or socio-economic context in which it takes place. What is more, the calculated actions of those involved in indoor cultivation in the developed world make eradication and policing efforts as problematic in the developed as in the developing world.

This paper considers drug crop eradication as a crime reduction problem and draws on models of crime prevention to illustrate the difficulties inherent in preventing the crime of cannabis cultivation.

Do surveys in drug research still make sense?

Carola Schrijvers and Dike van de Mheen
IVO Addiction Research Institute

Objective

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the question whether surveys in drug research still make sense. First of all we will argue that there are no good alternatives. In addition we will show that surveys are needed for several reasons. And last, we will discuss how we can improve surveys.

There are no good alternatives for surveys

The alternative for the measurement of alcohol consumption might be sales or taxation data (per capita consumption). There are considerable drawbacks of that method due to unrecorded alcohol consumption and home produced alcohol. With respect to drug figures, the problem is even bigger: because of the illegal status there is no such alternative.

Surveys are needed for several reasons

Even if surveys are not perfect, they are still needed, to obtain knowledge about:

- the distribution of drug use among subgroups (age, gender, ethnicity) and among countries
- using patterns: average use, frequency, heavy episodic use, weekend use etc
- problems related to drug use
- developments of drug use over time
- associations of consumption of drugs with other variables, such as motives, use of other substances, personality characteristics etc.

Improvement of surveys continues

Of course surveys should be conducted according to standards in general survey literature, like sufficient sample size, power calculations, correct weighting etc. But new methods also have to be explored. For example, internet surveys give opportunities to achieve better results by lowering underestimation, less social desirability, less memory loss etc. In future, surveys may also be possible with other new media.

Conclusion

Based on our arguments, which will be discussed in more detail during the presentation, we will come to the conclusion that surveys in drug research still make sense.

Resisting complexity; evidence based knowledge and the neglect of practice

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Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research

Evidence based knowledge, practice, and policy are much debated concepts within a wide range of different fields such as medicine, child care, social work, and public health. With the launching of the book; “Drug Policy and the Public Good (Babor et.al. 2010),” which calls for; “a new drug policy which is evidence based, realistic and co-ordinate.”, the drug field might be next in line to embrace these debates. Based on a literary review, a critical evaluation of; “Drug Policy and the Public Good”, and drawing on examples from a wide range of fields, we explore the central debates connected with evidence based practices and policy. We understand these debates as a continuation of the positivist dispute. The core issue is; how to understand social science knowledge production and its relationship to power.

Our argument is based on the following four points.

1. Knowledge production in social science is not proof based, like in the natural sciences. Hence, the evidences social scientists produce are not unambiguous, irrefutable or speak for themselves. Within social science it is desirable to trade the concept evidence based with empirically based knowledge.
2. Advocates for evidence based practices and policies enforce a knowledge hierarchy which stresses “best evidence” from Randomized Control Trials and excludes studies which analyze how different (drug) policies work. Therefore advocacy of RCT- studies can silence insights on how (drug) policies create, recreate and reinforce social inequality and power structures.
3. A rigorous advocacy of RCT- studies, oversimplifies the relationship between social (drug) problems and (drug) policy. This is because RCT-studies, seldom investigate the interplay between “output” and ideological positions, don’t pay adequate attention to the specifics of social, cultural and historical context, don’t recognize the importance of the participants meaning creation, and seldom make their theoretical assumptions explicit.
4. When RCT- studies is used as the main base for knowledge production in a social field with aims at informing policy, the public research agenda and flow of money in fields like drug policy and the child care services, seeks simplicity and knowledge of (cause and) effects instead of approaches which attend to complexity.

A027

Monitoring of the legal drug phenomenon on the Web

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EMCDDA, Lisbon, Portugal

The EMCDDA has been assigned a key role in the detection and assessment of new drugs in the European Union, and on occasion undertake assessments on a new psychoactive substance's potential to cause public health and social harm. In order to identify and monitor new developments in the online drug market, the EMCDDA initiated in 2006 a series of cross sectional studies or 'snapshots' of online drug shops. The monitoring of online drug sales in multiple languages (15) is challenging and calls into question our perception of normally well-established concepts. For instance, the concept of 'country' is hardly meaningful in the cyberspace reality of online shops and 'geographical indicators' for a given online shop might point to 4 different countries. The presentation will focus on methodological considerations linked to carrying out multi-language online snapshots and present some findings on the sale of so called 'legal highs' in Europe, their availability, prices, marketing, and 'country'.

A028

Taking drugs to make music to take drugs to?

Alfred Springer

University of Vienna, LBI Addiction Research

Type of research: Theoretical (theory of subculture, historiography of popular culture and drug use), using epidemiological data from own research; drug prevention research..

A certain relationship between music and drug taking can be detected on different levels: the drug issue is part of folklore, popular culture inscribes itself into a tradition of a “culture of intoxication and pleasure”, musical production is reported to be bound to drug experiences and sometimes tries to mirror such experiences, drug taking takes place among the people who belong to a certain music oriented partial culture. A recent approach in drug prevention blames some types of music and of musical participation to stimulate drug taking of youngsters and proposes new kinds of censorship and parental control.

The presentation will outline these issues of the topic; furthermore the historical development of popular culture will be outlined to explore the relationship of different drug experiences with certain types of popular music in subcultures and to demonstrate that sometimes changes in drug use signal changes in the style of cultural (musical) expression . A model will be presented that links drug use to other features of sub /youth-cultural behaviour traits and sets of rituals, showing that the intensity of drug use mirrors the level of involvement in the subcultural core group.

The new type of prevention mentioned above will be critically explored.

Theories of subculture (Hall, Hebdige), historiography (Collin), analysis of special types of popular culture (Van Cagle) and some earlier work by myself will be used as a theoretical frame as well as some epidemiological data from research on the cultural participation of different types of youth groups.

Dealing with prices. Finding pricing mechanisms in (EU)regional cannabis markets

Tim Surmont

Institute for International Research on Criminal Policy – Ghent University

For several years the Belgian indoor cannabis growing industry is booming. After dismantling a plantation, the Belgian prosecution *estimates* the financial advantages of the involved actors. The Belgian prosecutor uses a fixed retail price to make this estimation (€3 per gram), without differentiating at different levels of the market chain or taking other variables into account. This research triangulates a literature review on pricing mechanisms in drug markets – and more specific for marijuana – and qualitative fieldwork. The objective is to reveal prices and pricing mechanisms in specific chains of the Belgian cannabis market by interviewing active stakeholders (growers, high-level dealers, low-level dealers,...) found through snowball-sampling.

In literature we find pricing mechanisms such as *quantity discounting*, *conventional pricing*, *quality criteria*, *policy impact* and *geographical influences*. Our preliminary findings indicate that these mechanisms are mainly confirmed. At the same time we find that the specific relationship between buyer and seller also influences the transactions. These findings are still preliminary, since the interview phase has started in April and is still ongoing. The fieldwork will be concluded in September 2010 and preliminary results will be available.

With this research we will try to describe the evolution of marijuana prices through specific chains of the market from grower to consumer. It is already clear now that the sample leads us across the national border, which gives this research an international dimension. Regional borders are being used to facilitate the transactions rather than acting as a barrier.

Irish Travellers, selective assimilation and drugs: a question of social capital?

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Objectives

The Irish Traveller community is identified “*as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland*” (Irish Traveller Movement, 2003) and existed in Irish society since medieval times (Binchy, 1994; Ni Shuinear, 1994; Clarke, 1998). The Travellers in Ireland maintain a strong sense of ethnic identity, attachment and affiliation to their culture against rising assimilatory efforts by governments and policies. The Irish Traveller community whilst presenting with low drug prevalence trends is at increased risk of problematic drug use, as consequence of assimilatory stresses, marginalisation, poverty and poor health status (Fountain, 2006). Drug use represents potential for additional exclusion in the form of further stigmatisation, social exclusion and cultural dissipation. The key premise for the research was to explore how the social capital environment ‘*enables*’ the emergence of socially situated drug risk and drug activity in the Traveller community, and how drug activity can also become a medium for group membership, support and solidarity, and achieving social space, status and sense of social agency.

Methodology

Qualitative research using 12 gender specific focus groups with Travellers ($n=57$) was conducted in the Western region of Ireland (Van Hout, 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2010a in press; 2010b in press; 2010c in press). The narratives were mapped within a conceptual discourse of social capital and risk in relation to ethnicity and trust, neutralisation of risk, mutual resource acquisition, normative and reciprocal frameworks for drug use.

Significant Results

The social capital framework was presented as a resource relating to networks and associational relationships between Irish Travellers and the dominant Irish ‘*settled society*’, and illustrated how individual and collective actions relating to risk and drug use can be better understood within the sanctioning of the “*local social world*” of Travellers. Discriminatory experiences, low levels of institutional trust and influx of drug activity in Traveller communities is contributing to the neutralisation of drug taking risk, and the development of normative and reciprocal relationships in drug activities. Traditional anti drug Traveller culture is diminishing in potency, as family networks and groups become fragmented, and over time one would question if drug use among Travellers will replicate or even exceed that of the “*settled*” population, given the marginalisation and discrimination they experience. The level of Traveller attachment to both Traveller and sedentarist values, and development of new action schemas in Traveller habitus will predict

Traveller negotiation of the risk environment, as this ethnic group strive to retain their culture within the dominant sedentarist Irish society.

Conclusions

The restricted '*sense of Traveller belonging*' in dominant Irish discourse is the crux of the problem for Travellers in Ireland. One must endeavour to understand the inter related networks of Traveller existence, with the interplays of inner and outer discourse as key to understanding drug use shifts and changing patterns of drug use among Travellers within modern Irish society.

A031

Approaches to measure the outcome of HCV-prevention on drug users

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In Europe, harm reduction has been established as a major approach to minimise risk behaviour and blood-borne diseases among IDUs. A number of studies tried to evaluate the effects of harm reduction on minimising infectious diseases. From a methodological point of view there are several difficulties to evaluate the outcome of harm-reduction measures. Against this background our presentation aims at discussing methods to measure the effects of interventions to reduce the transmission of hepatitis C. The discussion on methods is based on a pilot project on HCV-prevention which is currently conducted in Berlin. Objectives of the pilot project are to increase risk (blood) awareness and knowledge on HCV, to reduce people starting with intravenous drug use, and to reduce the infection with hepatitis C. These objectives are evaluated by a combination of different methods: documentation of the interventions, of the self-reported HCV status, results of blood-testing, questionnaires on the HCV knowledge, data on drug use in consumption rooms and interviews with project participants. Major methodological limitations regarding the evaluation of harm reduction outcome will be discussed.

Drug use combinations among a sample of ‘problem’ drug users – drugs market influences and challenges for drug services

Jennifer Ward

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The purpose of this paper is to report combination drug use results from a European six-city study (UNODC funded, completed 2007), of which London was a participating city. The study utilised quantitative and qualitative methods and interviewed ‘current’ drug users from two drug user populations – ‘problematic’ and ‘recreational’. Key actors working in the drugs arena were also interviewed. Findings from the London problem drug user sample revealed a high proportion were combination heroin and crack cocaine users, and this consumption was often on top of daily substitution methadone prescriptions. This emerging trend was considered to be resultant on changes to local drug markets where drug sellers had expanded and diversified their trading to respond to, as well as to stimulate demand from individual drug users.

Such findings demonstrate the dynamic economic nature of drugs markets at both the street-level and the social network level. Moreover, the findings reveal that while the provision of the substitution drug – methadone, draws drug users into treatment services where wider health and social problems can be addressed it might be that National Health Service prescribed methadone dosage is not adequate to individual drug users needs. This undermines efforts to divert drug users from heroin dependent lifestyles and street-level drug using scenes. Instead, methadone becomes established as an additional drug to the repertoire of drugs already being used by problem drug users, and drug users remain associated with the illicit purchase and supply of drugs and the rules and conduct of street-level drug using scenes.

The European dimension of the study enabled comparisons of drugs use styles across the cities. Similar combination drug use trends were reflected in the Amsterdam and Turin problem drug user sample. These findings inform us that drugs treatment and services in the different cities need to be responsive to the different health and lifestyle problems that might be connected to this style of drug use. Moreover, questions remain unanswered on this overlapping drugs market organisation and whether there are new or altered codes of conduct and hierarchical structures occurring.

Spice and other “Herbal blends”: demand, types of users, motivations for use. Findings from a pilot study in Frankfurt

Bernd Werse

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The presentation refers to results from a pilot study on users of Spice and other so-called “herbal blends” in Frankfurt. The main goals of the study were the general prevalence of these products among adolescents, the development of demand and supply, the detection of “typical” users and their motivations for use. The active compounds of Spice were banned in Germany in January 2009, another ban on synthetic substances detected in “herbal blends” took place in January 2010. In this period, many other European countries have outlawed several cannabinomimetic substances.

Quantitative findings are based on secondary analysis of data from a representative school survey in Frankfurt. In addition, qualitative semi-structured interviews with experts (employees of “head shops”) and users were conducted.

Among 15-18-year-old youth in Frankfurt, 6% have tried Spice at least once in their lifetime; most of them are current cannabis users and/or have prior experiences with other illicit drugs. Very few adolescents use Spice repeatedly.

During the German media hype on Spice in 2008, the demand for Spice products skyrocketed. However, most of the purchasers – often rather “normal” looking or business-like persons – tried the drug only a few times. After the German ban on Spice, “herbal blends” sales dropped considerably. Ever since, the largest part of the demand is limited to regular users. Most of those appear to be regular cannabis users who use the products as a substitute for cannabis. Some of these persons have to do drug screenings because their driving licence was revoked, others are afraid that such a thing could happen to them. Other sub-groups include people who work for companies with random workplace drug testing and former problematic hard-drugs-using treatment clients. Some other consumers use “herbal blends” simply because they prefer the effects over the effects of cannabis products.

To sum up, the upcoming of “herbal blends” did not create a completely new group of psychoactive drugs users. Although many people with supposedly few illicit drugs experiences tried Spice products at the time of the extensive media coverage, repeated or regular use appears to be limited to drug-experienced persons. There is a certain clientele for whom “herbal blends” are a welcome expansion of the range of useable drugs. The demand for such products will probably remain quite stable even if further bans will be enacted, because there is an unknown number of still legal other synthetic substances with THC-like effects.

A034

Music preference and drug use

Marije Wouters

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Many studies have shown associations between music and substance use, and the role drug use plays in nightlife (for example: Lim et al., 2009; Van Havere, 2009). Generally speaking the use of drugs is higher among visitors of nightlife centers than among the general population. A common problem with local studies on this subject – both at national and international level – is that they address different target populations and apply different methodologies. In a national survey in nightlife throughout the Netherlands, two samples were targeted: people attending night clubs (clubbers, n=2044) and people attending large (dance) music festivals (party-goers, n=920). In both samples the same questionnaire was used, with questions about drug use, nightlife behaviour and music preference.

Music preference was measured by asking respondents which kind of music they preferred to listen to when going out. Clubbers and party-goers showed both similarities and differences in their music of choice. Overall, the largest categories were dance, top 40 (music high in the charts), urban and hardcore.

Prevalence of drug use was measured life time, last year, last month and during the night of the survey. It varied strongly across and within both samples, but overall current use of illicit drugs most often referred to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines. Regarding music preference, striking similarities between the two samples were found in both socio-demographic profiles and drug use. In the presentation the different drug use patterns will be explored, and the link with music preference both during night life and at home will be discussed.